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UNCLAS GUATEMALA 000623

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

GENEVA FOR JEFF DELAURENTIS
DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO USOAS

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SUBJECT: NEW GUATEMALAN AMBASSADORS TO GENEVA, TOKYO, AND
OAS

REF: GENEVA 720

1. (SBU) An excellent MFA source confirmed that Ricardo Alvarado was sworn in at noon on March 4 as Guatemalan Ambassador to Geneva. Ambassador to the OAS, Arturo Duarte, will move to Tokyo and will probably be replaced by Victor Godoy. Bio information below. End Summary.

2. (SBU) Ricardo ALVARADO Ortigoza is a lawyer specializing in constitutional law and human rights. He also holds a masters degree in public administration from San Carlos University. He is a member of the ruling FRG party and became Executive Director of the Presidential Human Rights Commission (COPREDEH in Spanish) when the Portillo Administration came to power in January 2000. Alvarado resigned in the wake of the Vice President's dismissal of COPREDEH President Victor Godoy (see para 4) in May, 2001. Alvarado has been in the press recently for his role representing the government of Guatemala before the Inter-American Court for Human Rights in its hearing of the Myrna Mack case. The GOG committed a major tactical error at the hearing, withdrawing its defense inexplicably at the outset of the hearing.

3. (SBU) Arturo DUARTE Ortiz is a highly successful career diplomat. He won a Fulbright and holds a master's degree in Anthropology from State University of New York as well as a graduate certificate in Latin American Studies. Duarte also holds a graduate certificate in International Relations from the University of Brazilia. Duarte's diplomatic career includes high-profile postings such as Counselor to the Guatemalan Embassy in Washington, Alternate Representative to the OAS, Director General for Multilateral Affairs and Permanent Representative to the OAS. As Director General for Multilateral Affairs, Duarte was a reliable Embassy contact, capable of speaking with authority on a wide range of policy issues. Duarte is an accomplished vocalist and expert on religious music from Guatemala's colonial period.

4. (SBU) Victor Hugo GODOY Morales is a friend of President Portillo and a career politician with leftist roots. He served as a member of Congress from 1985 - 1990 with the now-defunct Revolutionary Party. He holds a degree in Sociology from San Carlos University. From January 2000 to May 2001, Godoy headed the Presidential Human Rights Commission. He was dismissed after being accused of leaking Guatemala's position on the 2001 Cuba Resolution at the UN Human Rights Commission. Godoy denied the accusation and was appointed by Portillo to several Presidential advisory positions before being named Minister of Labor in February 2002. Godoy continued reform of the Inspectorate at Labor, began new worker training initiatives, encouraged social dialogue between labor and business leaders (so much so that some believe he lost his job for this reason), and (half-heartedly) pursued legislative changes to the labor procedural code dealing with labor rights violations. Labor leaders believe Godoy was replaced for refusing to take a hard line against striking teachers. Godoy does not speak English well.

5 (SBU) Comment: Our MFA source commented that despite Alvarado's background in Human Rights, convention wisdom within the Ministry holds that he will be far less independent than was his predecessor in Geneva. Asked how she thought Alvarado might address the lack of fundamental Human Rights protections for four Guatemalans tried and sentenced in 2002 in Cuba, our source stated that no one in the Foreign Ministry knew what Alvarado's appointment would mean for the Cuba vote but added that she felt relations with Cuba will deepen with the arrival of the Cuban Foreign Minister. She also speculated that the decision would be made by President Portillo alone with little or no input from the Ministry and that Alvarado would probably carry out Portillo's instructions precisely.
HAMILTON